

**U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security**

**United States  
Coast Guard**



Office of the Chief Administrative Law Judge  
United States Coast Guard

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5720  
September 23, 2019

Emma Best  
MuchRock News  
DEPT MR 74784  
411A Highland Ave.  
Somerville, MA 02144-2516

RE: DHS FOIA APPEAL NUMBER 2019-HQAP-00371

Dear Ms. Best:

This letter responds to your June 20, 2019 appeal of the response of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Privacy Office (PRIV) to your FOIA request (Request No. 2019-HQFO-00833) for information regarding FOIA processes.

Your initial request, submitted electronically on June 5, 2019, sought

1. Documents describing or generated as part of the establishment of any different processing queues for FOIA requests.
2. Documents describing the rules and procedures governing any different processing FOIA queues.
3. Documents, produced in the previous 15 years, containing reports or statistics describing FOIA processing queues.
4. Documents describing procedures for the handling or coordination of requests from high volume FOIA requesters.
5. Documents describing procedures, rules and prerequisites for any exceptions to processing requests in a "first in, first out" process.
6. Documents describing procedures and rules for the processing of especially complex or delicate FOIA requests.
7. Documents describing procedures and rules for the processing of 'high visibility' FOIA requests, such as those which are likely to elicit reactions from the media or the public.
8. Documents describing procedures and rules for the processing of FOIA requests from members of Congress and federal government agencies.
9. Documents describing procedures and rules for the processing of FOIA requests from non-federal law enforcement agencies.

On June 18, 2019, PRIV issued its final response containing five hyperlinks to responsive documents. In your appeal, you challenge the adequacy of the search. Because the response provided by PRIV was the result of an adequate and reasonable search, your appeal is **DENIED**.

Pursuant to a memorandum of agreement, the United States Coast Guard Office of the Chief Administrative Law Judge is reviewing the FOIA appeals for the Department of Homeland Security General Counsel's office. Therefore, the Office of the Chief Administrative Law Judge will be rendering the official appeal decision on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security.

On review, the documents produced by PRIV are the complete records in their possession. The Agency conducted a search of what it considered the locations most likely to produce responsive records. The fact that the search did not yield any documents other than those found on the websites given to you via hyperlink does not indicate the search was inadequate.

Notwithstanding the above decision, as part of the 2007 FOIA amendments, the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) was created to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation. If you are requesting access to your own records (which is considered a Privacy Act request), you should know that OGIS does not have the authority to handle requests made under the Privacy Act of 1974. If you wish to contact OGIS, you may email them at [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov) or call 1-877-684-6448.

This decision is the final action of the DHS FOIA Appeal Number 2019-HQAP-00371; FOIA Request Number 2019-HQFO-00833. While a comprehensive review of your appeal was made, you may seek judicial review of this decision pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §552(a)(4)(B) in United States District Court for either 1) the district where you reside, 2) the district where the agency records are situated, or 3) the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah M. Grabenstein".

Sarah M. Grabenstein  
Attorney Advisor  
United States Coast Guard

Copy : DHS Privacy Office Director of FOIA Appeals and Litigation

Sent *via* first class mail to the above address